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applicability or meaning for the western world. There are no admirers of Condillac among us ; and, if there are a few imitators of the Baron d'Holbach, their errors were not caused by the prevalence of one system of philosophy, nor will they be converted by the introduction of another. Metaphysical arguments will not cure that blindness and insensibility of heart and intellect, of which ignorance and heedlessness are the primary and the sustaining causes. Instead of calling upon such men to close their eyes and ears, and distrust the information given by their senses, for fear they should be deluded by empiricism, or some other philosophical bugbear, rather bid them open their minds and hearts to the sights and sounds of creation, and hear and see everywhere proofs of the being of a God. Preach the Gospel to them instead of metaphysical speculations, — remembering the pregnant aphorism of Bacon ; “ As to seek philosophy in divinity is to seek the dead amongst the living, so to seek divinity in philosophy is to seek the living amongst the dead.”

ART. VI. — *Monaldi : a Tale*. Boston : Charles C. Little and James Brown. 1841. 12mo. pp. 253.

THOUGH this little volume bears no author's name on its title-page, it is understood to be from the pen of Washington Allston. This great artist is a poet as well as painter ; and, were it not for his overshadowing fame as the foremost painter of his age, he would unquestionably have been renowned as one of our most graceful and imaginative poets. The collection of poems, published by him many years ago, and now out of print, shows the invention, and fancy, and curious felicity of expression, that mark the true son of song ; and, had Mr. Allston followed out the poetical career, he would most certainly have reached, ere this, the same eminence as a writer, to which his genius has borne him in art.

We feel, as Americans, no small pride in Mr. Allston's genius and fame. It is part and parcel, and no small part, of our national reputation. He is too much absorbed in the love of his art, and too much occupied with the lovely and immortal creations of his genius, to make himself

the rival of other artists, or the head of any school. No morbid anxieties for his own fame intrude into the serene heaven of invention, in which his calm spirit ever moves. Quietly and surely he works on, finishing every year some exquisite picture, which alone would be enough to carry his name to other generations, as one of the most illustrious artists of the present. He is known and revered by all the rising artists of his country, and envied by none. Happy the man of genius, whose rare good fortune it is, not merely to outdo all his contemporaries in the beauty and excellence of his works, but to pass through a long career without feeling a breath of envy, or a lisp of reproach, upon his fair fame !

Mr. Allston's genius is understood as well, perhaps better, abroad. Many of his best pictures were painted in England. In Italy his abilities were fully appreciated by the young artists, who were his contemporaries in the Eternal City, and some of whom stand now at the head of the rising school of German art. One of the most distinguished critics of art in Germany, Karl Platner, has recently declared, that Mr. Allston approaches, in coloring, nearer the old masters of the best ages in Italian art, than any other modern painter. This opinion is expressed in the chapter on modern art in Rome, in the great work on Rome, published by the accomplished Prussian minister, Karl Bunsen, the successor of Niebuhr the historian ; and, when we reflect that the opinion was formed upon the earlier works of Mr. Allston, — the splendid productions of his matured genius never having been seen by the German critic, — we cannot help regarding it as a most gratifying tribute to the surpassing excellence of Mr. Allston's style. As he himself said on a late occasion of the prophetic raven, Platner only spoke for posterity when he uttered that memorable judgment. The moment Mr. Allston's name is written in the great book of the departed, — God grant it may be many years first ! — that moment his name will be taken out of the catalogue of painters belonging to the present age ; the distinctions of time will be forgotten ; and he will be placed side by side with the great brotherhood who have made the name of Italy illustrious as the home of the arts through all time. His works will be sought out and purchased at enormous prices, by curious collectors, and pilgrimages will be made by lovers and students of painting, to spots hallowed by the presence of some masterpiece of his genius.

But it is not our purpose, in the present paper, to speak at any length of Mr. Allston, the painter. He comes before us now in the new character of a prose writer. No little curiosity was felt by the public, when it was announced that Allston, the poet and painter, was on the point of appearing as a novelist ; and some anxiety was mingled with the curiosity, that he might not fail in this untried career. At length the book appeared, after having been laid aside more than twenty years, — more than double the time prescribed by the respectable but neglected old saw of Horace. It was written, it seems, for a periodical work, edited by a friend of the artist, — “*The Idle Man*” of Mr. Dana, we presume, — a work which manifested great genius and invention, but, not striking the public taste, was not well supported, and was discontinued by the editor before Mr. Allston’s Tale could be published. The manuscript was then thrown aside, and slept, like Rip Van Winkle, undisturbed more than twenty years.

The story of *Monaldi* turns upon jealousy. This passion is the least respectable of all the methods taken by foolish men to make themselves miserable. We have never had a strong liking for tales of distress, founded upon jealousy. From that blackamoor Othello down, we never read tale, novel, or play, where this was the mainspring of the plot, without feeling that a grain of common-sense would have put an end to the trouble, or, rather, would have prevented the trouble altogether. When the silly scoundrel smothers Desdemona, we have no feeling of pity for him as the victim of another’s villany, but we despise him for his weakness, and hate him for his cruelty, and could see him hanged with perfect complacency. Something like this feeling, we confess, mingles with our pleasure, in reading *Monaldi*. It seems as if a man of his genius and exquisite moral character, — united to a woman whose every thought was purity, whose every act one of the most delicate and tender love for him, and between whom and himself existed the most intimate blending of taste and soul, — could never be brought, by any entanglement of devilish arts, to believe his wife a polluted hypocrite, and to aim the assassin’s dagger at her defenceless bosom.

But such anomalies doubtless exist in nature. The warmth of the Italian temperament, and the unfortunate peculiarities

that have existed in times past in Italian society, probably render them more frequent there, than in our colder clime. To our less lively imaginations, the changes of character in such a story as *Monaldi*, seem, at first, too abrupt and startling. It appears an impossibility, that such a moral hurricane can spring up in a moment, and turn to a dreary desert, regions where all was but just now so smiling and serene. It shocks us to think, that the fierce bolt of human passions can, with the force and speed of lightning, blast and sear a happiness that was so deeply rooted, so blooming, and so full of delicious promise but a moment before. And yet it may be so. At any rate, upon a second and third reading of *Monaldi*, the improbability diminishes, and nearly disappears. At first we hurry over the pages, swept away by an irresistible interest in the fortunes of the personages with whom we sympathize so deeply. Many characteristic circumstances we pass by unnoticed ; many minute but important touches fail to have their due effect, until our curiosity is satisfied by a hasty reading, and we have time to turn back and dwell longer upon the details, than we were able to do at first.

Mr. Allston has wrought into this tale materials enough for two or three common novels ; and we are not sure that he would not have done better to draw out the varied passions of the story at greater length ; to paint with greater minuteness, and in a fuller style, the scenes and events through which his characters are made to pass ; to soften somewhat the suddenness of the transitions, and thus to explain and justify, more completely than he has done, the overwhelming catastrophe, in which virtue, genius, beauty, and fame are swallowed up. Many hints and intimations, which the observing reader notices in a second perusal, do this for the few ; but the great mass of readers, who never take up a book but once, will remain discontented with the manner in which the destinies of *Monaldi* and *Rosalia Landi* are wrought out. The great artist, studying as he does the effects of particular moments,—working up striking historical or tragic crises, and trusting to the imagination of the spectator to supply what goes before or follows ; presenting, as the very conditions and materials of his art force him to do, the passions, attitudes, groups, of a single second only to the senses,—is apt to apply the same methods, and use the same principles, when he passes from art to literature, from the canvass

or the marble to the printed page. Art and literature, it is true, rest upon the same essential principles of taste, upon the same deep and everlasting foundations of nature. But they differ in methods and materials. The artist has the great advantage of addressing himself to the mind and heart through the senses ; of presenting to the spectator forms, that all but live, and move, and breathe ; that speak in feature, look, and action, of the passions which their author meant to impress upon them. The poet, and the novelist, on the contrary, have to trust to the more vague and uncertain medium of words, phrases, sounds. To affect a reader, is a subtler and perhaps more difficult process, than to move the feelings of a spectator. The impressions made by words must, from the very nature of the case, be less defined and distinct, than those made by forms, attitudes, action, color. But then the writer has an excellent set-off to this superiority of the artist, in the interest of continued narrative. He can gradually excite our sympathy, by putting forward, in a striking light, event after event, distress after distress, and perplexity after perplexity. He can work us up to an agony of hope or fear, by the skilful arrangement of a thousand details scattered along a succession of passionate and agitating moments ; and he can round off the fictitious life he has created, by letting the passions sink to repose in the consciousness that poetic justice has been dealt among those whose joys and woes, whose virtues and crimes, have by turns soothed and roused the reader's mind.

In the conduct of his story, we think we see that Mr. Allston has been true to the artist's character. And though, as we have said before, hints and intimations are sufficiently thrown in to guide the careful reader to the right conclusion, yet the intervals between the great moments are not sufficiently filled out for a novel. We have no doubt this passionate story exists in his mind in the form of a series of pictures ; at least it would afford half a dozen glorious subjects for his pencil. It is not necessary, at this time, to give an analysis of the plot. Most readers are familiar with it long before this. A few remarks of a general nature, and some illustrative extracts, will embrace all that is requisite to be said at present.

We perceive the artist, not only in the respects we have above alluded to, but in the able delineation and skilful contrast of characters. The two leading personages, Maldura and

Monaldi, are of equal excellence, and are brought out with the greater effect by being set off against each other with such admirable judgment. They are traced from the first traits and impulses of schoolboy days, to the finished characters of the matured men ; and we cannot help admiring the delicate and subtle manner in which the diverging motives and influences, under which the two are gradually formed to such perfect opposites, are from time to time brought to light. How nobly is the mind of the true artist drawn in the generous Monaldi. Unconsciously the writer sketched the lovely picture from himself. In all, except the whirlwind passions roused by a villain's arts, we recognise the well-known and venerated genius, whose presence among us is a benediction. With what vigor are the fearful consequences of boundless and irregular literary ambition portrayed in the gloomy character and horrible destiny of Maldura. The lesson is a startling but a necessary one. Literary ambition, the desire, not to excel for the sake of excellence, and through an unmingled and unselfish love of letters, is one of the most baneful passions that can agitate the breast of man. What envyings and backbitings, what uncharitable construction of motives, and what malice of disparaging innuendo, have in all ages disgraced the conversations of literary men, too morbidly alive to what they are pleased to call their literary fame, to bear with patience the praises bestowed upon another, or to enjoy freely and heartily the intellectual delights which literary intercourse lays open before them. The lesson was never more forcibly taught than by the promising youth ending in the blasted manhood ; the great abilities turned to the most wretched purposes ; the apparent friendship sinking into the most revolting crime, and then into bitter but unavailing repentance, — that mark the unhappy career of Maldura.

The sensual villain, Count Fialto, is a remarkable and well-drawn figure, necessary to the purposes of the plot, and strongly contrasting with the intellectual profligacy of his employer. But the character which sheds a divine charm over the dark picture, and harmonizes all its terrible elements into a serene and heavenly beauty, is that of Rosalia Landi. The delineation of a perfect woman with natural traits, without exaggeration ; the blending of all these ingredients of character in just proportion ; the gentleness without weakness, and the firmness free from masculine hardness ; the soft com-

pliance joined to unbending love of truth and honor ; which make up the admirable woman in real life ; this portraiture is, we are inclined to think, the rarest and most difficult achievement of the writer's art. But rare and difficult as it is, Mr. Allston has achieved the task in his *Rosalia Landi*. From the dawning conception to the last touches of execution, all is beautiful, attractive, and harmonious in this most lovely creation ; and we feel at the close, that the author's pencil would be fitly employed to illustrate this triumph of his pen.

We have often before pored over Allston's pages to admire the grace and delicacy of his English poetical style. This book is equally remarkable for its rich and harmonious prose. The nice selection of epithets, the faultless arrangement of the members of the sentences, and the rhythmical cadence to which thought and expression seem to move united, combine to make it one of the most finished works in American literature. We fall here and there upon a most delicately wrought picture of some natural scene, which betrays the artist's eye and hand ; then a deep moral reflection, speaking a varied experience and observation of life, arrests our attention and awakens a train of solemn thought ; then a maxim of art, worthy to be laid up among the treasures of memory, is modestly put forth, but bears under its simple expression the wisdom of studious and thoughtful years. Such, in our judgment, is the character of this little volume by our great artist ; it is a work of high genius, of rare beauty, and of a moral purity and religious elevation, which distinguish it from most literary works of the age. We shall now illustrate our remarks by a few short extracts. We begin with the following sketch of *Monaldi*.

“ The profession which *Monaldi* had chosen for the future occupation of his life was that of a painter ; to which, however, he could not be said to have come wholly unprepared. The slight sketch just given of him will show that the most important part, the mind of a painter, he already possessed ; the nature of his amusements (in which, some one has well observed, men are generally most in earnest,) having unconsciously disciplined his mind for this pursuit. He had looked at Nature with the eye of a lover ; none of her minutest beauties had escaped him, and all that were stirring to a sensitive heart and a romantic imagination were treasured up in his memory, as themes of delightful musing in her absence : and they came to him in those moments with that never-failing

freshness and life which love can best give to the absent. But the skill and the hand of an artist were still to be acquired.

“ But perseverance, if not a mark of genius, is at least one of its practical adjuncts ; and Monaldi possessed it. Indeed, there is but one mode of making endurable the perpetual craving of any master-passion, — the continually laboring to satisfy it. And, so it be innocent, how sweet the reward ! giving health to the mind without the sense of toil. This Monaldi enjoyed ; for he never felt that he had been toiling, even when the dawn, as it often happened, broke in upon his labors.

“ Without going more into detail, in a very few years Monaldi was universally acknowledged to be the first painter in Italy. His merit, however, was not merely comparative. He differed from his contemporaries no less in kind than in degree. If he held any thing in common with others, it was with those of ages past, — with the mighty dead of the fifteenth century ; from them he had learned the language of his art, but his thoughts, and their turn of expression, were his own. His originality, therefore, was felt by all ; and his country hailed him as one coming, in the spirit of Raffaello, to revive by his genius her ancient glory.

“ It is not, however, to be supposed, that the claims of the new style were allowed at once, since it required not only the acquisition of a new taste, but the abandoning an old one. In what is called a critical age, which is generally that which follows the age of production, it is rarely that an original author is well received at once. There are two classes of opponents, which he is almost sure to encounter : the one consists of those who, without feeling or imagination, are yet ambitious of the reputation of critics ; who set out with some theory, either ready made to their hands and purely traditional, or else *reasoned out* by themselves from some plausible dogma, which they dignify with the name of philosophy. As these criticize for *distinction*, every work of art becomes to them, of course, a personal affair, which they accordingly approach either as patrons or enemies ; and woe to the poor artist who shall have had the hardihood to think for himself. In the other class is comprised the well-meaning multitude, who, having no pretensions of their own, are easily awed by authority ; and, afraid to give way to their natural feeling, receive without distrust the more confident dicta of these self-created arbiters. Perhaps at no time was the effect of this peculiar usurpation more sadly illustrated than in the prescriptive commonplace which distinguished the period of which we speak. The first appearance of Monaldi was consequently met by an opposition proportioned to the degree of his departure from the current opin-

ions. But as his good sense had restrained him from venturing before the public until by long and patient study he had felt himself entitled to take the rank of a master, he bore the attacks of his assailants with the equanimity of one who well knew that the ground he stood upon was not the quicksand of self-love. Besides, he had no vanity to be wounded, and the folly of their criticisms he disdained to notice, leaving it to time to establish his claims. Nor was this wise forbearance long unrewarded, for it is the nature of truth, sooner or later, to command recognition ; some kindred mind will at last respond to it ; and there is no true response that is not given in love ; hence the lover-like enthusiasm with which it is hailed, and dwelt upon, until the echo of like minds spreads it abroad, to be finally received by the many as a matter of faith. It was so with Monaldi." — pp. 24 — 27.

By way of contrast to the preceding, we give the description of the effect upon Maldura of his first literary disappointment.

" Maldura's heart stiffened within him, but his pride controlled him, and he masked his thoughts with something like composure. Yet he dared not trust himself to speak, but stood looking at Piccini, as if waiting for him to go on. ' I believe that 's all,' said the Count, carelessly twirling his hat, and rising to take leave.

" Maldura roused himself, and, making an effort, said, ' No, Sir, there is one person whom you have only named, — Alfieri ! what did he say ?'

" ' Nothing !' Piccini pronounced this word with a graver tone than usual ; it was his fiercest bolt, and he knew that a show of feeling would send it home. Then, after pausing a moment, he hurried out of the room.

" Maldura sunk back in his chair, and groaned in the bitterness of his spirit. ' As for the wretches who make a trade of sarcasm, and whose petty self-interest would fatten on the misfortunes of a rival, I can despise them ; but Alfieri, — the manly, just Alfieri, — to see me thus mangled, torn piece-meal before his eyes, and say *nothing* ! Am I then beneath his praise ? Could he not find one little spark of genius in me to kindle up his own, and consume my base assassins ? No, — he saw them pounce upon and embowel me, and yet said nothing.'

" Maldura closed his eyes to shut out the light of day ; but neither their lids, nor the darkness of night could shut out from his mind the hateful forms of his revilers. He saw them in their assemblies, on the Corso, in the coffee-houses, knotted

together like fiends, and making infernal mirth with the shreds and scraps of his verses, while the vulgar rabble, quitting their games of domino, and grinning around, showed themselves but too happy to have chanced there at the sport. In fine, there are no visions of mortified ambition which did not rise up before him. But they did not subdue his pride. Yet it was near a week before he could collect sufficient courage to stir abroad ; nor did he then venture till he had well settled the course he meant to pursue, namely, to treat all his acquaintance still with civility ; to appear as little concerned about his failure as possible, well knowing that in proportion to his dejection would be the triumph of his enemies ; but to accept no favor, and especially to have no *friend* ; — a resolution which showed the true character of the man, who could not endure even kindness, unless offered as incense to his pride.

“ This artificial carriage had the desired effect. It silenced the flippant, and almost disarmed the malignant ; while those of kinder natures saw in it only additional motives for respect ; indeed there were some even generous enough to think better of his genius for the good temper with which he seemed to bear his disappointment. In short, so quietly did he pass it off, that after a few months no one thought, or appeared to think, of Maldura as an unsuccessful author.” — pp. 37 – 39.

Maldura, after this disappointment, publishes a satire which is successful ; but, not content with this, he tries his hand at a tragedy, the cold reception of which puts the finishing touch to his character.

“ This was an unlooked-for blow ; and he sat for near an hour gazing upon the manager’s letter, as if endeavouring to recall, he knew not what ; for its purport was gone ere hardly known. But his recollection soon returned. Better had it not, than so to make visible the utter desolation within him, — to show him a mind without home or object ; for he could look neither back nor forward. If he looked to the future, in place of the splendid visions that once rose like a mirage, he beheld a desert ; if he turned to the past, his laborious realities, once seeming so gorgeous, now left without purpose, only cumbered the ground with their heavy ruins.

“ In this hopeless state, however, there was one comforter which never deserted him, — his indomitable pride ; it was this sustained him. Had a shadow of self-distrust but crossed Maldura for a moment, it might have darkened to insanity ; but no doubts of his genius had ever entered his mind ; he was therefore an ill-used man, and he hated the world which had thus withheld his just rights. His only solace now, was in the wretched resource of the misanthrope, in that childish

revenge, which, in the folly of his anger, he imagines himself taking on the world, by foregoing its kindnesses ; for there is small difference between a thorough misanthrope and a sullen child ; indeed their *illogical* wrath generally takes the same course in both, namely, to retort an injury by spiting themselves. For the full indulgence of this miserable temper, he retired to an unfrequented part of the city, and, rarely venturing out except at night, it was generally concluded that he had quitted Rome, — where he was soon forgotten.”—pp. 54, 55.

The following paragraph is one of those passages in which there is no mistaking the artist's hand.

“ It was after a morning of more than usual depression and concern on his account, that Monaldi one day called on his unhappy friend. Maldura's apathy seemed for the moment overcome ; and he could not help expressing surprise at such an unwonted visit ; for it was scarcely past mid-day, and he knew that nothing short of necessity could tempt the devoted artist to leave his studio at that hour. Monaldi simply replied, that he had felt indisposed to work ; and he drew a chair to a window. The apartment, being in an upper story, and the house somewhat elevated, commanded an extensive view of the southern portion of the city, overlooking the Campo Vaccino, once the ancient Forum, with its surrounding ruins, and taking in a part of the Coliseum. The air was hot and close, and there was a thin, yellow haze over the distance like that which precedes the scirocco, but the nearer objects were clear and distinct, and so bright that the eye could hardly rest on them without quivering, especially on the modern buildings, with their huge sweep of whited walls, and their red-tiled roofs, that lay burning in the sun, while the sharp, black shadows, which here and there seemed to indent the dazzling masses, might almost have been fancied the cinder-tracks of his fire. The streets of Rome, at no time very noisy, are for nothing more remarkable than, during the summer months, for their noon-tide stillness, the meridian heat being frequently so intense as to stop all business, driving every thing within doors, with the proverbial exception of dogs and strangers. But even these might scarcely have withstood the present scorching atmosphere. It was now high noon, and the few straggling vine-dressers that were wont to stir in this secluded quarter had already been driven under shelter ; not a vestige of life was to be seen, not a bird on the wing, and so deep was the stillness that a solitary foot-fall might have filled the whole air ; neither was this stillness lessened by the presence of the two friends, — for nothing so deepens silence as man at rest ; they

had both sat mutely gazing from the window, and apparently unconscious of the lapse of time, till the bell of a neighbouring church warned them of it."—pp. 63–65.

And the following is one of those unconsciously instructive passages with which the book abounds.

"He 'accepted the commission,' he said, 'not with the arrogant hope of producing a rival to the picture of Raffaele, but in grateful compliance with the wishes of his patron.' Besides, with a just reverence for his art, he looked upon all competition as unworthy a true artist; nay, he even doubted whether any one could command the power of his own genius whilst his mind was under the influence of so vulgar a motive. 'For what,' he would say, 'is that which you call my genius, but the love and perception of *excellence*,—the twin power that incites and directs to successful production? which can never coexist with the desire to diminish, or even to contend with, that in another. It would be rather self-love, than a true love of art, did I value it less in Raffaele than in myself.' He might have added another reason: that competition implying comparison, and comparison a difference only of *degree*, could not *really* exist between men of genius; since the individualizing power by which we recognise genius, or the originating faculty, must necessarily mark their several productions by a difference in *kind*. But he needed not this deduction of the understanding; his own lofty impulses placed him on surer ground."—p. 76.

Our hero thus makes his first entrance into the house of Rosalia Landi and her father; and, as it is a moment of the greatest importance to the artist and the lovely girl, we may as well give the whole scene.

"Having accepted the commission, however, it was necessary that he should see the picture which he was expected to equal; he accordingly waited on the gentleman to whose collection it belonged, and was shown into his gallery. Though Monaldi had heard much of this collection, he found that report had for once fallen far short of the truth; and the pleasure of such a surprise to him may be imagined by those who have witnessed the effect of unexpected excellence on a man of genius.

"He had expected to see only a fine Raffaele; but he now found himself surrounded by the master spirits of Rome and Venice: they seemed to bewilder him with delight, and he was wandering from one to another, as if uncertain where to

rest, when, passing a door at the end of the gallery, his eyes fell on an object to which every other immediately gave place. It was the form of a young female who was leaning, or rather bending, over the back of a chair, and reading. At first he saw only its general loveliness, and he gazed on it as on a more beautiful picture, till a slight movement suddenly gave it a new character, — it was the quickening grace that gives life to symmetry. There is a charm in life which no pencil can reach, — it thrilled him. But when he caught a glimpse of the half-averted face, the pearly forehead, gleaming through clusters of black, glossy hair, — the lustrous, intellectual line beneath, just seen through the half-closed eyelids, — the tremulously-parted lips, and the almost visible soul that seemed to rush from them upon the page before her, — even the wonders of his art appeared like idle mockeries. The eyes of the reader now turned upon him. Still he continued to gaze, and to give way to his new and undefined emotions, till the thought of his intrusion suddenly crossed him, and his face crimsoned. How far the embarrassment may have been shared by Rosalia Landi (for she it was) was hardly known to herself, as the entrance of her father immediately restored her to her usual self-possession.

“‘It gives us no common pleasure, signor Monaldi,’ said the Advocate, as he presented him to his daughter, ‘that we have this opportunity to make some acknowledgment for the many happy hours we owe to you. I may add, that I use the epithet in no indefinite sense ; for when is the mind more innocent than while it loses itself in a pure work of genius ? — and mere freedom from evil should be happiness : but your art effects more, — it unites innocence with pleasure.’

“‘We owe signor Monaldi much indeed,’ said Rosalia, bowing.

“Monaldi had none of that spurious modesty which affects to shrink from praise when conscious of deserving it ; yet he could make no reply.

“Without noticing his silence, Landi observed, that perhaps he ought to apologize for the length of his absence. ‘And yet,’ he added, turning to the pictures, ‘I cannot honestly say that I regret it, since it has left signor Monaldi more at liberty to form a fair opinion ; for I am connoisseur enough to know that the first impression of a picture is seldom aided by words, — especially those of a fond collector. The pictures, I doubt not, have fared all the better without me.’

“They now stood before the *Raffaelle*, and the Advocate waited for several minutes for his visiter to speak ; but Monaldi’s thoughts had no connexion with his senses ; he saw

nothing, though his eyes were apparently fixed on the picture, but the beautiful vision that still possessed his imagination.

“ ‘Perhaps report may have overrated it,’ at length said Landi, in something like a tone of disappointment.

“ ‘Or probably,’ added Rosalia, observing the blankness of his countenance, ‘our favorite Madonna may not be one with signor Monaldi.’

“ ‘It is *your* favorite then?’ said Monaldi, with a sudden change of expression. He had no time to think of the abruptness of this question before Rosalia replied, —

“ ‘And we had hoped too of yours;’ for it is natural to wish our opinions confirmed by those who have a right to direct them.’

“ ‘Nay,’ said Monaldi, ‘Raffaelle is one whom criticism can affect but little either way. He speaks to the heart, a part of us that never mistakes a meaning; and they who have one to understand should ask nothing in liking him but the pleasure of sympathy.’

“ ‘And yet there are many technical beauties,’ said the Advocate, ‘which an unpractised eye needs to have pointed out.’

“ ‘Yes, — and faults too,’ answered Monaldi; ‘but his execution makes only a small part of that by which he affects us. But had he even the color of Titian, or the magic chiaroscuro of Correggio, they would scarcely add to that sentient spirit with which our own communes. I have certainly seen more beautiful faces; we sometimes meet them in nature, — faces to look at, and with pleasure, — but not to think of like this. Besides, Raffaelle does more than make us think of him; he makes us forget his deficiencies, — or rather, supply them.’

“ ‘I think I understand you, — when the heart is touched, but a hint is enough,’ said Rosalia.

“ ‘Ay,’ said the Advocate, smiling, ‘’t is with pictures as with life; only bribe that invisible *finisher* and we are sure to reach perfection. However, since there is no other human way to perfection of any kind, I do not see that it is unwise to allow the illusion, — which certainly elevates us while it lasts; for we cannot have a sense of the perfect, though imaginary, while we admit ignoble thoughts.’

“ ‘This is a great admission for you, Sir,’ said Rosalia; ‘’t is the best apology for romance I have heard.’

“ ‘Is it? Well, child, then I have been romantic myself without knowing it. But the picture before us’ —

“ ‘I could not forget it if I would,’ interrupted Monaldi, with excitement, — ‘that single-hearted, that ineffable look of love! yet so pure and passionless, — so like what we may be-

lieve of the love of angels. It seems as if I had never before known the power of my art.'

"As he spoke, his eyes unconsciously wandered to Rosalia. The charm was there; and his art was now as much indebted to the living presence as a little before it had suffered from it.

"'If one may judge from his works,' said Rosalia, 'Raffa-elle must have been a very amiable man.'

"'We have no reason to think otherwise,' answered Monaldi. 'He at least *knew how* to be so: if he was not, his self-reproach must have been no small punishment, if at all proportioned to his exquisite perception of moral beauty. But he was all you believe, according to the testimony of his contemporaries, by whom he appears to have been as much beloved as admired.'

"'I could wish,' said Rosalia, 'that tradition had spared us either more or less of the great author of that Prophet;'—they had turned to a cartoon by Michael Angelo. 'They say he was morose; and many affect to find in that the reason why he does not touch their hearts. Yet, I know not how it is, whether he stirs the heart or not, there is *a something* in his works that so lifts one above our present world, or at least, which so raises one above all ordinary emotions, that I never quit the Sistine Chapel without feeling it impossible to believe any charge to his discredit.'

"'Never believe it!' said Monaldi with energy. 'He had too great a soul,—too rapt for an unkind feeling. If he did not often sympathize with those about him, it was because he had but little in common with them. Not that he had less of passion, but more of the intellectual. His heart seems to have been so sublimated by his imagination, that his too refined affections,—I can almost believe,—sought a higher sphere,—even *that* in which the forms of his pencil seem to have had their birth; for they are neither men nor women,—at least like us that walk the earth,—but rather of a race which minds of a high order might call up when they think of the inhabitants of the planet Saturn. Elsewhere, perhaps, this may be jargon,—but not *here*,—I venture to hope.' Rosalia bowed. 'Nay, the eloquent confession I have just heard could not have been made, had not the spell of Michael Angelo been understood as well as felt.'

"'You have assisted me to understand him better,' said Rosalia. 'And, if I do, perhaps I might say, that he makes me think, instead of feel. In other words, the effect is not mere sensation.'

"Monaldi answered her only by a look, but one of such unmingled pleasure, as would have called up a blush, had not a

similar feeling prevented her observing it. He felt as if he had been listening to the echoes of his own mind.

“‘Upon my word, Rosalia,’ said her father, ‘I did not know you were so much of a connoisseur; ’t is quite new to me, I assure you.’

“Rosalia now blushed, for the compliment made her sensible of her enthusiasm, which now surprised herself: she could not recollect that she had ever before felt so much excited.

“‘Nay, my dear, I am serious, — and I need not say how pleased. How you have escaped the cant of the day I can’t guess. ’T is now the fashion to talk of Michael Angelo’s extravagance, of his want of truth, and *what not*, — as if truth were only in what we have *seen*! This matter-of-fact philosophy has infected the age. Let the artists look to it! They have already begun to quarrel with the Apollo, — because the skin wants suppleness! But what is that? — a mere mechanical defect. Then they cavil at the form, — those exquisite proportions. And where would be his celestial lightness, his preternatural majesty without them? Signor Monaldi will forgive this strain: perhaps, I should not hold it before an artist.’

“‘I should be very sorry to have it believed,’ answered Monaldi, ‘that any artist could be found, — I mean worthy the name, — who would refuse to be instructed because the lesson does not come from a professor. I, for one, shall always be most happy to become a listener, especially where, from the pledge given, I shall have so just a hope of being enlightened. I am not used to complimenting; and signor Landi will pardon me if I add, that I respect my art too much to affect a deference for any criticism, — come whence it may, — which I know to be unsound; it is founded in truth, and the professor degrades it who palters with its principles.’

“‘Perhaps you overrate me,’ said the Advocate. ‘But, be that as it may, signor Monaldi cannot do me a greater favor than in making me a frequent listener to himself.’

“Monaldi then took leave.

“‘So gentle, — yet so commanding!’ said Landi, his eyes still resting on the door through which his visiter had passed, — ‘even lofty, — yet so wholly free of pretence and affectation, — not an atom of either, but perfectly natural, even when he talked of the people of Saturn. Did you observe how his face brightened then, as if he had been actually familiar with them? I can almost fancy that we have been talking with Raffaele. He has not disappointed you, I am sure.’

“‘No,’ replied Rosalia, ‘on the contrary —’ She felt provoked with herself that she could say nothing more.

“ ‘I do not know,’ added the Advocate, ‘that I ever met with a young man who won upon me so rapidly. But ’t is an intellectual creature, — rarely to be met with.’ ” — pp. 77–86.

We must pass over the fairy scenes of married happiness, and come to those over which the clouds of destiny begin to lower. The infernal arts of Maldura have already begun to work, and the first germs of suspicion have been planted in Monaldi’s breast, by his instrument, Count Fialto.

“ There are few cares which do not yield for a time to the influence of fine music. Monaldi had felt it, and he was returning homeward full of happy thoughts, when, arriving within a few paces of his house, he perceived a person lurking about his gateway. The impulse of the moment determined him to stop ; and, being just then under a lamp which hung before the image of a saint, he turned his back towards it, and muffled his face in his cloak. He had scarcely done so when the person passed him. Monaldi was thunder-struck : there could be no mistake, — the light had fallen on the other’s face, — it was Fialto.

“ There is a little cloud often described by travellers, and well known on the Indian seas, which at first appears like a dark speck in the horizon ; as it rises its hue deepens, and its size increases ; yet the approach of it is gradual, and the air meanwhile is soft and motionless ; but, while the inexperienced mariner is perhaps regarding it as a mere matter of curiosity, his sails unbent, and loosely hanging to the masts, — in the twinkling of an eye, it seems to leap upon the ship, — and, in a moment more, sails, masts, and all, are swept by the board. With like desolation did this little incident smite the heart of Monaldi : he felt as if some sudden calamity had laid his peace in ruins ; yet he could give it no distinct shape, nor even comprehend the evil that would follow. He knew not with what, or with whom, to connect Fialto’s visit ; but that Fialto had been in his house seemed almost beyond doubt ; he had not indeed seen him come out of it, — yet why was he hanging about it at this hour ? ‘ But how did this appear to concern himself ? ’ He had scarcely asked the question, when twenty circumstances occurred in answer ; but chiefly by the Count’s uniform solicitude to avoid him ; his confusion when detected gazing at the house ; his disappearance from the theatre soon after Monaldi’s entrance ; his absence during the rest of the evening, though it was a new play ; and his sudden reappearance in this place, and at such a time ; these were too evident in their bearing to allow of any misapprehension, and Monaldi

was forced to admit that Fialto's purpose, whatever it was, had, in some way or other, relation to himself. There was an obscurity in this conclusion which thickened on his brain like an Egyptian darkness ; not a thought could pierce it ; even the avenues to conjecture were closed ; he could only feel that he was surrounded by a thing impenetrable, and he had no resource but to wait till some further circumstance should give form and direction to his undefined misgivings. Nor was he long without one. The closing of a window above roused him from his reverie. He looked up and saw a light in his wife's chamber, and a female figure passing from the window. Rosalia and Fialto now met in his thoughts." — pp. 128 – 130.

The following paragraph is worthy to be cited for the fine reflections it contains.

"Morally his heart *was* dead. But what must have been the agony with which a heart so gentle, so generous and noble, stiffened into death !

"Let no one marvel at this change, sudden as it may seem ; for there is no limit to human inconsistency. A single circumstance has often transformed the firmest nature, making the same being his own strongest contrast ; many things, — injury, ingratitude, disappointment, — may do it ; in a word, any thing which robs a man of that which gives a charm to his existence ; and chiefly and most rapid will the change be with those of deep and social feelings, who live in others. Such is man when left to himself ; and there is but one thing which can make him consistent, — RELIGION ; the only unchanging source of moral harmony. But Monaldi, unhappily, knew little of this. Not that he was wholly without religion ; on the contrary, his understanding having assented to its truths, he believed himself a good Christian ; but he wanted that vital faith which mingles with every thought and foreruns every action, ever looking through time to their fruits in eternity. The kindness and generosity of his disposition had hitherto stood in its stead ; he had delighted in making others happy, and thought nothing a task which could add to their consolation or welfare. But hitherto he had been happy, and his life had seemed to him like one of fresher ages ; like the first stream that wandered through Eden, sweet and pure in itself, and bearing on its bosom the bright and lovely images of a thousand flowers. Would one so full not sometimes overflow ? or would one *so filled* often thirst for what is spiritual, for what belongs to the dim and distant future ? preparing in the hour of peace for the hour of temptation ? Then he had met with

no adversity, with no crosses to wean him gradually from this delightful paradise ; no sorrow to lift his soul to that where trouble cannot enter. But though the present world seemed enough, and more than enough for him, in reality it was nothing ; it was only through *one* of earth that he saw and loved all else ; she alone filled his heart, modified his perceptions, and shed her own beauty over every vision of his mind. Now she was lost to him ; torn away by a single wrench. And could this have been without leaving a fearful void ? To Monaldi's heart she was all ; and his all was now gone, leaving it empty. An empty human heart ! — an abyss the earth's depths cannot match. And how was it now to be filled ? His story will show." — pp. 176, 177.

The effects of successful crime upon the guilty Maldura are thus finely and discriminatingly portrayed.

" We left Maldura in a state of misery only to be conceived by the guilty, or by those to whom a holy abhorrence of sin reveals its frightful nature. It was in vain he summoned the casuistry which had hitherto supported him in the contemplation of crime. It came now, as formerly, and with a sound of might, but it spent itself like the wind against a solid rock ; for he had now to do, not with hypothesis, but a based reality, darkening the present, and stretching its long shadow into the future. Before the accomplishment of his purpose his life had seemed a burden, and he would have welcomed death as a release from trouble ; but now, though the burden was heavier and more galling, the thought of death only filled him with dismay, and he shrank from it as the traveller shrinks from an abyss whose edge his foot feels in the dark, but whose depth neither his eye nor his imagination can fathom.

" Thus will the sense of guilt sometimes cow the proudest philosophy. The atheist may speculate, and go on speculating till he is brought up by annihilation ; he may then return to life, and reason away the difference between good and evil ; he may even go further, and imagine to himself the perpetration of the most atrocious acts ; and still he may eat his bread with relish, and sleep soundly in his bed ; for, his sins, wanting, as it were, substance, having no actual solidity to leave their traces in his memory, all future retribution may seem to him a thing with which, in any case, he can have no concern ; but let him once turn his theory to practice, — let him make crime palpable, — in an instant he feels its hot impress on his soul. Then it is, that what may happen beyond the grave becomes no matter of indifference ; and, though his *reason* may seem to have proved that death is a final end, then

comes the question ; What does his reason *know* of death ? Then, last of all, the little word *if*, swelling to a fearful size, and standing at the outlet of his theories, like a relentless giant, ready to demolish his conclusions.

“ But Maldura’s sufferings were now to be suspended, for the report of Rosalia’s recovery at last reached him. This unlooked-for intelligence was followed by a spasm of joy scarcely to have been exceeded had he been suddenly reprieved from an ignominious death. He felt like one emerging from the hopeless darkness of a dungeon to the light and free air of day ; and though the hope which had once sustained him was gone for ever, and he had nothing to look to, he yet began to fancy, and even to feel, without stopping to ask why, that his former relish of life was now returning. But his respite was short. It was natural that release from a great, though only imagined, evil should render him for a time less sensible to such as were minor and actual ; but they were light only from comparison, and no sooner did the weight of the former begin to pass from his memory, than the pressure of the latter became more perceptible, till at last, in spite of every effort to resist them, they became the subjects of his daily and hourly contemplation.

“ Amongst these, the sorest, and that which time rather added to than diminished, was the destruction of Monaldi’s peace, perhaps of his life ; for Monaldi had never been heard of since the fatal night, and whither he had gone, or what had become of him, was still uncertain.” — pp. 205–207.

The description of Rosalia’s arrival at the wretched retreat of her husband, whom she had hoped to find restored to his reason, but whose intellect had been a second time overthrown, by the confessions of Maldura, is this.

“ If it be hard to part with the dead, and to see one borne to the grave with whom we have been accustomed to associate all our wishes and schemes of happiness, and without whom nothing in life seems capable of imparting enjoyment, there is yet a consolation in the thought that our grief is only for our own suffering, since it cannot reach one to whom our loss is a gain. What then must it be to feel this entire avulsion from the living ; to know that the object with whom our very soul was mixed, and who is thus parted from our common being, still walks the same earth, breathes the same air, and wears the same form ; yet lives, as to us, as if dead, — closed, sealed up from all our thoughts and sympathies, like to a statue of adamant. What must it be to know too, that this second self, though callous and impenetrable from without, is yet within all

sense ? The partial palsy-death of the body is but a faint image of this half-death of the twin-being wife and husband. And Rosalia soon felt it in all its agony.

“The alarm occasioned by this last scene was so sudden, that neither father nor daughter thought more of first making known their arrival, but, following the landlady, entered Monaldi’s chamber. He was sitting on the bed, his hands clenched on his knees, and his eyes fixed on vacancy. Rosalia sprang forward, but at the sight of his countenance she shrunk back and stood gazing on him in silence. And next to madness was the dreadful conviction within her. She would have folded him in her arms ; but the thought of the touch of the benumbed, vacant being before her sickened her, and she sunk back in her father’s arms. But she had not fainted : the energy of hope that he might again recover, came like a ministering spirit, and nerved her for the occasion.

“‘You must go with me,’ said Landi.

“‘No,’ replied Rosalia, in a low, but firm, voice ; ‘I am *his* even in madness. Do not fear for me ; the shock is now over. But speak to him.’ Landi then advancing spoke to him by name ; but, Monaldi making no answer, he drew nearer and took his hand. For a moment Monaldi turned to look at him, then withdrawing his eyes as if with terror, — ‘Away, away !’ he cried. ‘Why come you again ? thou liest, — Maldura did not do it, — ’t was I murdered her. Look, — look at her, — ’t was I, — she was my wife, — she ’ll confess it herself. But no, she cannot, — she ’s dead.’

“‘No, she lives, — she is still yours !’ cried Rosalia, going to him.

“‘Ha ! there are two !’ cried the maniac with a frightful shriek. ‘Take them away, — I did not murder both.’

“The father and daughter stood silent and motionless ; their very breath seemed suspended ; and for several minutes not a sound was heard but the quick, low panting of the affrighted maniac. Landi, alarmed for the reason of his daughter, drew her into another room, when she fell on his neck and wept. But we close the scene ; for we cannot describe that which no tears relieved, — even that blessed dew, which, in most other cases, softens agony.” — pp. 239 – 241.

We close these extracts with a passage from the beginning of the book, describing the picture, painted by the artist in his madness, and embodying the treachery of Maldura.

“After waiting some time for my conductor’s return, and finding little worth looking at besides the Lanfranc, I turned to leave the chapel by the way I had entered ; but, taking a

wrong door, I came into a dark passage, leading, as I supposed, to an inner court. This being my first visit to a convent, a natural curiosity tempted me to proceed, when, instead of a court, I found myself in a large apartment. The light (which descended from above) was so powerful, that for nearly a minute I could distinguish nothing, and I rested on a form attached to the wainscoting. I then put up my hand to shade my eyes, when, — the fearful vision is even now before me, — I seemed to be standing before an abyss in space, boundless and black. In the midst of this permeable pitch stood a colossal mass of gold, in shape like an altar, and girdled about by a huge serpent, gorgeous and terrible ; his body flecked with diamonds, and his head an enormous carbuncle, floating like a meteor on the air above. Such was the Throne. But no words can describe the gigantic Being that sat thereon, — the grace, the majesty, its transcendent form ; and yet I shuddered as I looked, for its superhuman countenance seemed, as it were, to radiate falsehood ; every feature was a contradiction, — the eye, the mouth, even to the nostril, — whilst the expression of the whole was of that unnatural softness which can only be conceived of malignant blandishment. It was the appalling beauty of the King of Hell. The frightful discord vibrated through my whole frame, and I turned for relief to the figure below ; for at his feet knelt one who appeared to belong to our race of earth. But I had turned from the first only to witness in this second object its withering fascination. It was a man apparently in the prime of life, but pale and emaciated, as if prematurely wasted by his unholy devotion, yet still devoted, — with outstretched hands, and eyes upraised to their idol, fixed with a vehemence that seemed almost to start them from their sockets. The agony of his eye, contrasting with the prostrate, reckless worship of his attitude, but too well told his tale : I beheld the mortal conflict between the conscience and the will, — the visible struggle of a soul in the toils of sin. I could look no longer.” — pp. 14–16.

We think Mr. Allston has managed his story with good judgment in not restoring Monaldi to his wife, as we at first hoped he would. The man who has once aimed the dagger at the heart of the woman he loves, however strong and damning the circumstances that frenzied him to the deadly deed, and however thoroughly he may afterwards deplore and repent his suspicions, and however firmly he may be convinced of her innocence, can never be to her what he was before. The idea of settling down from such storms of the passions, in which life has been attempted and blood has

been shed, into another domestic calm, is shocking and preposterous. Better, far better, the Christian deathbed, and the lucid interval of rational affection and gentle resignation, with which this affecting story is brought to an appropriate close.

ART. VII. — *Ancient Spanish Ballads, Historical and Romantic, translated, with Notes, by J. G. LOCKHART, Esquire.* A new Edition, revised, with an Introductory Essay on the Origin, Antiquity, Character, and Influence of the Ancient Ballads of Spain ; and an Analytical Account, with Specimens, of the Romance of the Cid. New York. Wiley & Putnam. 8vo. pp. 272.

A COLLECTION of Spanish popular poetry opens to the lover of romance a region comparatively little explored, and one where a most fertile soil promises a rich harvest. The glory of no other nation is so intimately interwoven with poetry and song ; and the most splendid deeds of her heroes are embalmed in romance.

“Teems not each ditty with the glorious tale ?
 Ah, such, alas ! the hero’s amplest fate !
 When granite moulders, and when records fail,
 A peasant’s plaint prolongs the dubious date.
 Pride, bend thine eye from heaven to thine estate ;
 See, how the mighty shrink into a song !
 Can volume, pillar, pile, preserve thee great ?
 Or must thou trust Tradition’s simple tongue,
 When Flattery sleeps with thee, and History does thee
 wrong ?” *

And why should it be humiliating to the pride of fame, to live longer in the songs of the multitude, than in the records of history written comparatively for a few ? Have not the praises of the bard ever been regarded as the hero’s best reward ? And would not the immortal Cid, had one of the Moorish magicians, who, no doubt, were numbered in the trains of the captive kings, permitted him to see in a magic

* *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage, Canto I.*